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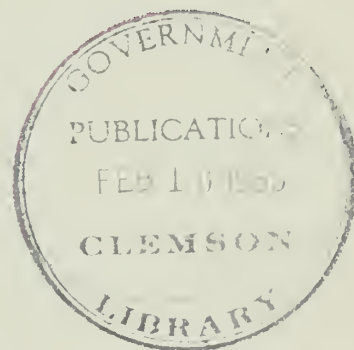
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Proposed

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER



*Cover: the southern maidenhair fern and the
smallmouth bass, life forms representative
of the Buffalo's outstanding natural values.*

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Proposed

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER

ARKANSAS



1968

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service



Early morning fog lies along the winding course of the Buffalo Valley.



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Near the Buffalo's highest source.

The Buffalo River is born in a vast sea of trees high in the Ozarks of northwestern Arkansas. At first only a trickle, half hidden among leaves and rocks, the stream a quarter of a mile down slips over the first ledge, a new force on the land, slowly gaining in strength. For 148 miles it meanders across Ozark hill country toward a junction with the larger White River. Undiminished by man, the Buffalo today runs through a rich and varied landscape. Considered for size, for completeness, and for wild qualities, it is one of this country's last significant natural rivers.

For the past decade the river's future has been a center of debate.

In the 1930's, Buffalo River State Park was established to protect a section of the lower river. But no move was made to preserve the entire river until the late 1950's, when both the State of Arkansas and the National Park Service identified the Buffalo as possessing important scenic and recreational values. Other uses were also suggested at that time. The U.S. Corps of Engineers renewed an earlier proposal for damming the stream, but public sentiment has favored preserving the Buffalo as a National River, along the lines recommended by the Park Service in a 1963 report.

All this comes at a time of transition for both the river and the region. The Buffalo is today a clear, free-flowing stream because neither industry nor great numbers of people have settled along its course. There are signs that this may change. While

the Ozarks have lost population during the last 30 years, the surrounding urban areas have grown enormously. For people in St. Louis, Kansas City, Memphis, Dallas, and half a dozen other large cities, the forested Ozarks represent recreation grounds of a kind and quality lacking nearer home. In the coming years it is not likely that the Buffalo will escape the pressures created by their numbers.

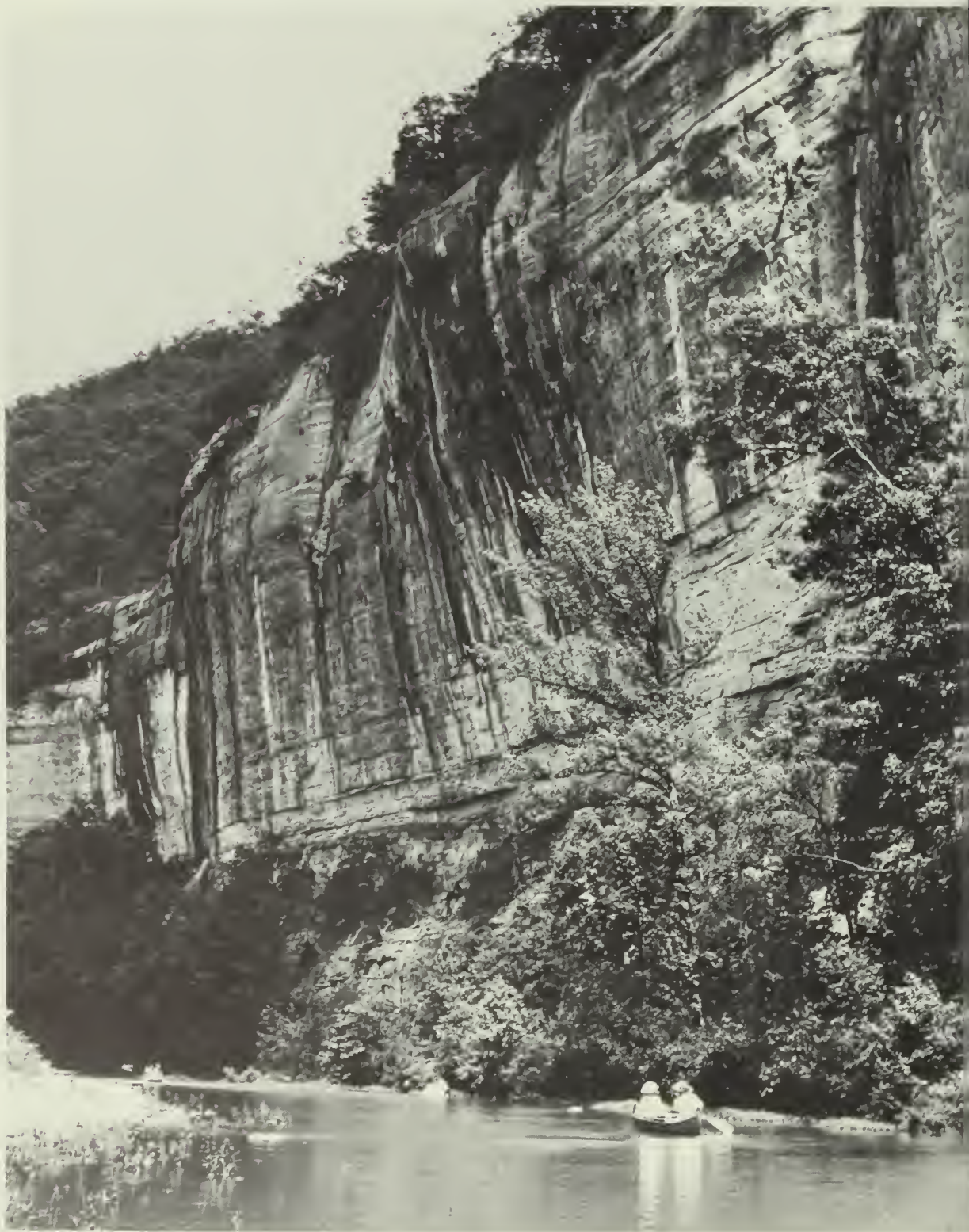
In 1967, after legislation calling for a National River was introduced in Congress, the National Park Service restudied the Buffalo to refine and bring up to date its basic plans and policies for the conservation and use of the river. This report offers a summary of those findings. It calls attention to the rich natural qualities of the Buffalo and outlines ways of achieving the fullest use and enjoyment of the river consistent with the perpetuation of its waters and landscapes. Both are National Park Service objectives. It would be sad irony if, under the impact of heavy use, the very qualities the public seeks on the Buffalo were to disappear. This report is also intended to help answer questions raised by the persons most affected by the National River proposal—those living near the Buffalo itself.



A barn and millpond at Boxley. A scenic tour road would pass along this part of the river, and farming would continue in the bottom lands under scenic easements.



Roark Bluff, along an impressive stretch of the upper Buffalo.



The Buffalo deserves national attention not for any single quality but for an outstanding combination of qualities. The very base of the river's appeal lies in its clean, flowing waters, which support a notable sports fishery and provide an opportunity for pleasurable boating and swimming. Its scenery is interesting and often spectacular. It is unspoiled by development and free of pollution. It has a remarkable collection of features illustrating its geology, botany, wildlife, archeology, and history. It is the only major stream left undammed in the Arkansas Ozarks, and in the entire region only the Current River in Missouri can be called its equal. Though the spring-fed Current has the more dependable flow, the Buffalo has by far the more dramatic scenery. And last, the Buffalo, with its mild climate and lengthy outdoor season, is within an easy day's drive of nearly 15 million people.

The entire Buffalo can generally be floated from the autumn rains until late May or early June. During summer's drought, the upper part of the river and later the middle reaches sometimes drop too low for boating, except for small craft. But any measurement of the river's "floatability" must consider the vagaries of weather, floaters' preferences for small boats or large ones, and their willingness to walk the shallows occasionally. Even with these small limitations, floating remains the best way to experience the river.

Many visitors will find the Buffalo equally interesting as a great outdoor museum, bearing the record of both natural change and the activities of man over thousands of years.

- The river's geological features illustrate the complicated story of the building and erosion of the Ozark Dome. Here are many-layered rocks and innumerable fossils; ancient peneplains and prominent escarpments; caves, arches and sinks;

canyons and solution valleys.

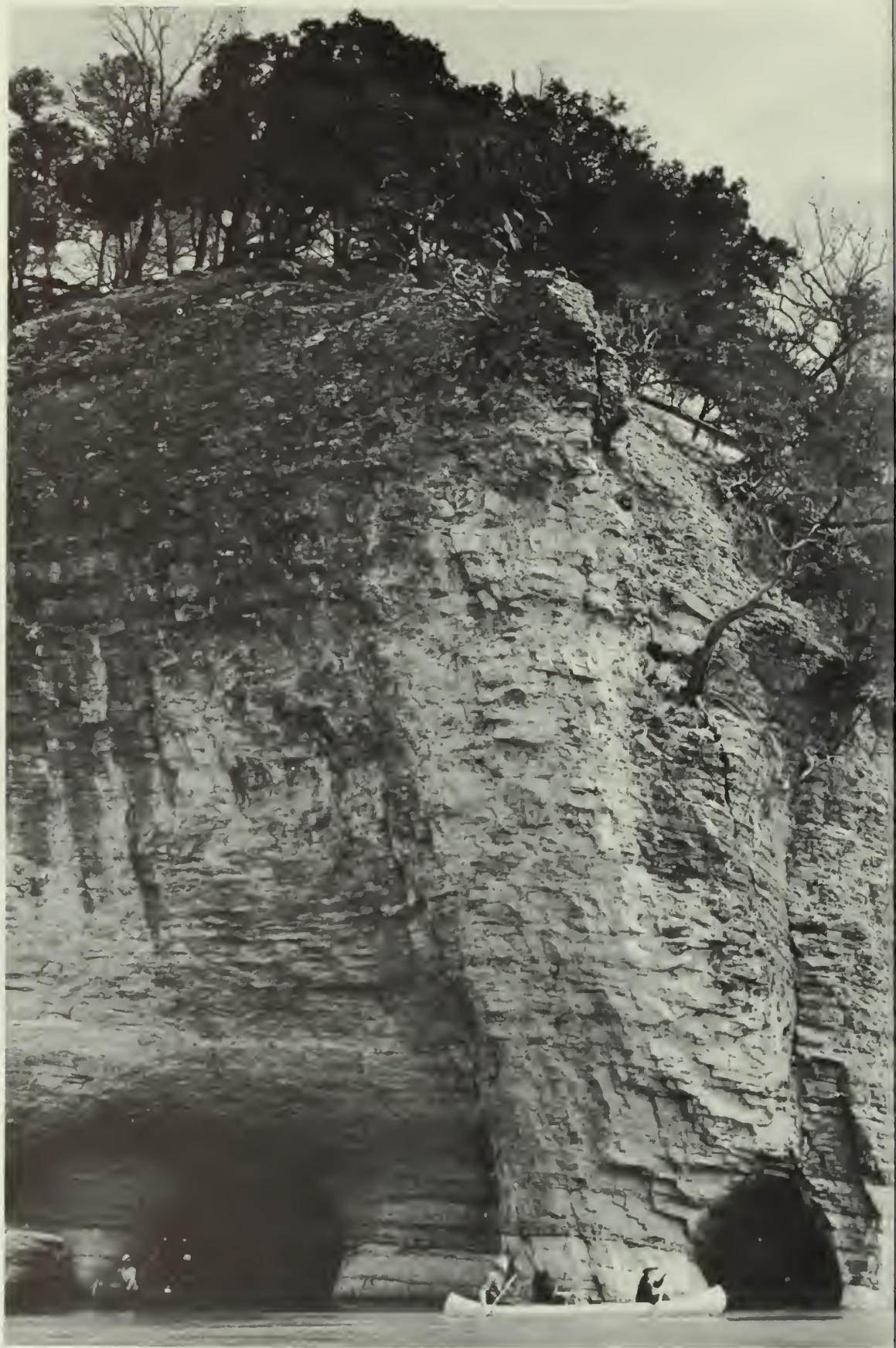
- The vegetation along the river is rich and diverse. Hillsides and bluffs, varying in exposure, provide habitats for some 1,500 species of plants.
- Wildlife are present in a variety of species, if not in great numbers. Nearly every animal native to an oak-hickory forest is known to live along the Buffalo. In number of fish species, the river and its tributaries constitute one of the richest areas in the Nation.
- When properly studied, the large number of archeological sites within the proposed boundaries should disclose the story of some 9,000 years of Indian occupation.
- Though never the scene of any great historical event, the Buffalo does have many artifacts relating to an important theme in rural American life: settlement and eventual overpopulation of the land, depletion of resources, and the subsequent emigration of farm families to the cities.

Many first comers to the Buffalo have been fishermen who also discovered the river's scenery. Others first arrived as casual sightseers, but they too found much more—side canyons, waterfalls, wildflowers, pioneer cabins, caves. Now the river is recognized as the central, unifying element of a whole complex of recreational resources, which people are only beginning to learn about and enjoy. Because the proposed park would embrace almost the entire stream, there would be a rare opportunity to interpret the river as an ecological unit whose processes and interrelationships shed new light on these and a host of other individual features.

It is this array of qualities that make the Buffalo an outstanding remnant of wild America, worthy of saving for its own sake as well as for the present and future needs of the region. To



The goat trail along Big Bluff (in Newton County), 300 feet above the river.



in the tunnel of the natural bridge in Lost Valley.



Many small falls flourish along the river after a rain.

The "bypass cave" in rugged Indian Creek Canyon.

Stalactites, encrusted with growing helictites: a rare combination found in Beauty Cave.



J. H. Schermerhorn



A rest stop on one of the river's many gravel bars.

dam the river would destroy its integrity and a great part of its irreplaceable and unique resources. To allow uncontrolled commercial development along the river—and that is the greater danger today—would also rapidly diminish the stream's fragile combination of values. But kept in its natural state and properly managed, the river valley will yield experiences of a kind and quality that are becoming all too rare in urbanized America.

A Buffalo National River would also make a significant economic difference to the Ozarks. In the past the people living near the Buffalo have depended mainly on declining returns from agriculture and forestry for their living. It has not been a prosperous way of life. Between 1940 and 1960, the populations of the five counties nearest the river (Newton, Searcy, Marion, Boone, and Baxter) dropped 21 percent. As recently as 1965 the per capita income in these counties came to only \$1,675 annually, and the average family income was less than half that for the Nation as a whole. Though some development has taken place in the Buffalo region over the past two decades, extensive industrialization does not appear likely.

Recreation will continue to be important to the Ozarks' economy, though it is limited in two ways. Most of the acreage in National Forests and State parks is dry upland, suitable only for such activities as hiking, hunting, and cave exploring, while water-based recreation consists mostly of fishing and power-boating on the region's many reservoirs. A Buffalo National River would add variety and an element of uniqueness to the attractions of the Ozarks.

How would the five counties benefit from the establishment of a major national recreational facility? To answer that question the Park Service asked specialists at the University of Arkansas to study the probable economic impact of the National River.

During the first 5 years that it would take for the National River to be established and brought into full operation, they estimate that:

- ☐ About 1.7 million persons would visit the river yearly, most of them over a season of 7 to 8 months;
- ☐ The Park Service would spend \$9 million for land acquisition and about \$9 million in construction, maintenance, and personnel costs;
- ☐ Private businessmen are likely to spend at least another \$5 million to build and improve nearby tourist accommodations;
- ☐ Tourist spending over this period would amount to over \$92 million and reach an eventual annual level of nearly \$34 million;
- ☐ The spending and respending of this new money would add nearly \$17 million to personal income in the area;
- ☐ Increased business activity brought about by existence of the National River would generate some 3,500 new job opportunities;
- ☐ Local retail and service trade should rise in volume by some 23 percent;
- ☐ Business activity in other nearby counties would expand because of the tourist traffic through the region.



Looking upstream from Red Bluff, below Gilbert.



This 200-foot waterfall in Hemmed-in-Hollow is the highest between the Appalachians and the Rockies.



Ferns in rich display: one example of the Buffalo's varied plant life.

The Ozarks are a meeting ground of varied and normally widely separated forms of life. In number of plant and animal species, it is considerably richer than surrounding regions. This biological wealth exists partly because of the broken topography, which provides a variety of habitats, but more because of past plant and animal migrations.

For the last hundred thousand years or so, as glaciers first advanced and then retreated, and as the climate slowly changed from humid to arid and then humid again, the entire Mississippi valley has been a parade ground for plants and animals on the gradual move. Thus when drought prevailed, prairies expanded eastward, and when the climate turned humid, the forests moved westward. The Ozark highlands, rising a thousand or more feet above the surrounding country, acted as a filter before this movement, permitting drought-adapted organisms to persist on dry slopes during long humid periods, and moisture-requiring species to survive in moist niches during dry spells. Most of the evidence today is composed of distribution patterns among fairly small life forms—ferns, minnows, centipedes. The Ozarks contain more living evidence of this type than any other part of mid-America. Because this assemblage of plant and animal migrants is well represented within the proposed National River, there would be many opportunities to interpret them under natural conditions.

The rocks of the Buffalo watershed are entirely sedimentary, laid down in an ancient marine basin which, over its 300-million-year history, underwent frequent and drastic change. Imposed on these rocks is a full gamut of erosional products, among them such phenomena as deeply entrenched stream meanders and at least two ancient peneplains as well as high bluffs, waterfalls, numerous springs, and hundreds of solution pits

and small caves.

Within the proposed National River, there are two features which in themselves are nationally noteworthy. One is the 200-foot waterfall in Hemmed-in-Hollow, the highest free fall between the southern Appalachians and the Rockies. The other is the collection of gypsum formations in Beauty Cave, which are outstanding in their variety and the size of single specimens. One or two types are not known anywhere else.

A largely oak-hickory forest covers the Ozark uplands. The region, in fact, is thought to be the source of this forest type. From here its constituent species advanced into the upper Midwest after the last glacial retreat.

Six species of oak—white, black, blackjack, chinkapin, post, and northern red—and three species of hickory—mockernut, black, and shagbark—predominate in the Buffalo watershed. There are smaller numbers of winged elm, red maple, sassafras, persimmon, walnut, hackberry, blackgum, shortleaf pine, redcedar, sweetgum, and some 40 other species of trees.

The richest forests along the Buffalo occur on the northern slopes and in cool shaded ravines, where the dominant oaks and hickories are flavored by beech, linden, yellowwood, ash, magnolia, and sugar maple.

Another forest type—mostly composed of sweetgum, sycamore, willow, the American and slippery elms, river birch, and boxelder—flourishes on the river's flood plain.

The largest native animals found in the region are the white-tailed deer, the coyote, the red wolf, and the black bear. None are common, even within the extensive area of the adjacent national forest. Otter, mink, and beaver have been spotted along the river.

The Buffalo is nationally outstanding for its many species of fish and for their unusually high productivity. The river is a "classic" stream for



Tombstone in an old cemetery below Rush.

smallmouth bass, whose original habitat within the Mississippi basin has been largely altered or destroyed. Largemouth bass, rock bass, spotted bass, bluegill sunfish, green sunfish, and catfish are here also. Among the unusual species are darters, the northern studfish, and the chestnut lamprey.

Indians lived along the Buffalo for at least the last 9,000 years. The earliest inhabitants were hunters and gatherers, and the variety of game, fish, and edible wild plants along the stream must have enabled small groups to live in the area continuously. Later, with knowledge of agriculture, Indians built small semi-permanent villages in the bottom lands. Others continued to use shelter caves under the bluffs. While only stone artifacts remain at the open sites, seeds, basketry and other perishables—rare evidence of the Indians' way of life—have been found in a few dry bluff-shelters.

The first white men to visit the Buffalo River area found that the Osages were using it as hunting territory. Later the Osages were replaced by Cherokees, who were driven farther west in 1828, ending the days of the Indian along the Buffalo.

Though changes have come more rapidly to the Buffalo since the 1820's, truthfully no single outstanding event in American history has ever taken place there. But many smaller events

along the Buffalo do fit into a significant American theme: the settlement and eventual over-population of a rural area, with subsequent emigration of many farm families to urban places.

Even before the Civil War, settlers had taken all the best bottom lands along the river and its tributaries. The war, with troops skirmishing and outlaws raiding throughout the area, disrupted normal life for a few years. Soon a new wave of immigrants, together with the sons and daughters of local pioneers, filled up the remaining open land, moving into the side hollows and up to the most remote benches and ridges. Homesteading continued until about 1910, when the Buffalo basin could hold no more people. (It was about this time also that the rural population of the United States as a whole reached its maximum).

For a while the homesteaders eked out their living, if not by farming their rocky acres, then by cutting the country's virgin timber, or by mining the scattered deposits of lead and zinc. As the resources played out in the decades after 1910, this way of life approached an end; people moved away to find a living elsewhere. Today, the population of the Buffalo watershed is only half what it was 60 years ago.

Within the proposed National River, every period of this historical

inflow and outflow of people has its tangible remains. The toil of the first-generation pioneers is reflected in the pastoral farm lands they cleared along Richland Creek and at Boxley. Their isolation and self-sufficiency is illustrated in small compass by Boxley's water mill, with its grindstones, flour screens, and cotton gin. The Civil War years are recalled by the broken relics of a Confederate saltpeter works and at the site of a violent skirmish at the mouth of Richland Creek. The homesteaders' simple existence can be readily imagined when viewing any one of many plain log dwellings still standing along the valley; the boom-and-bust days of zinc mining, when seeing the crumbling remains of the Rush ghost town; the feats of the timber cutters, when visiting the sites of their "tie slides" off bluffs along the middle Buffalo.

All considered, the most pervasive theme is that of people whom the land could no longer support. The evidence of their leaving is everywhere, in overgrown clearings, vacant barns, and foundations of homes now gone. The remains exist here and there the length and breadth of the National River.

In time the clearings will become woodlands again, and the ruins will slowly melt into the landscape. But the story of these people and their relationship to the land should not be forgotten.





Rocky field and lonely barn: to find a better life, many of the Buffalo's farm people had to move away.



Float fishing in a quiet pool a few miles below Gilbert.

In this section a broad plan is set forth for the conservation and public use of the river as a recreational area. If the National River is authorized and established by Congress, these ideas, subject of course to Congressional review, will form the basis for detailed action plans later on.

The basic purpose of the Buffalo National River would be to preserve the river as a clean, free-flowing stream and to conserve and interpret a stretch of Ozark country containing important scenic and scientific features for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The National River presented here is a long, narrow strip of park land encompassing 132 miles of the Buffalo from near its headwaters all the way to its mouth. This area, counting present Federal and State* landholdings, totals 95,730 acres. The strip would vary in width from less than one-half mile to 4 miles, averaging about 1.8 miles. Boundaries were drawn to include the river and associated scenic features while keeping land acquisition to a minimum.

Public Use

Within this strip of land would be placed the developments needed for public use of the area. The General Development Map at the end of this booklet locates many of them: visitor centers, campgrounds, picnic areas, roads, boat access points. They are planned to make it easier for visitors to have as varied an experience as possible while preserving the river's many features within a natural



Winter canoeing above Camp Orr.

*Two State parks and State-owned public hunting lands, totaling 2,960 acres. This plan contemplates that eventually these lands would be included in the National River. Their transfer to the National Park Service, however, would be at the discretion of their present administering agencies.

setting. These developments would be phased in as lands are acquired, visits increase, and funds are appropriated for construction.

A 200-site campground would be located at the headquarters area near Silver Hill, and smaller ones at Ponca, Pruitt, Woolum, Buffalo River State Park, and Mouth-of-Bufferalo. At the headquarters area, there would also be special campsites for larger organized groups—Scout troops, church groups, school classes. Because long stretches of the river are isolated except to floaters and hikers, small “primitive” camps, with cleared tent sites, fireplaces, pit toilets, and garbage cans, would be provided at intervals. Informal camping on the river’s gravel bars would continue.

Except for unobtrusive primitive camps, visitors floating the Buffalo would find practically no development within view of the river. At existing boat launching sites, access would be improved and parking areas and toilets constructed away from the river’s edge. In the woods along the length of the river, there would be a hiking and riding trail. At each major developed area, loop trails could be provided for excursions of 2 to 6 hours. Along the pastoral valley from Ponca to Boxley there could be a bicycle trail. Another may be possible along the old railroad grade from Gilbert to Brush Creek.

Swimming in the river’s deep, clear pools would continue as always. At heavily used locations, facilities such as dressing shelters, toilets, and perhaps lifeguards would be provided. Because so many roads lead in to the river, it is not practical to charge entrance fees. User charges would probably be limited to fees for guide service, such as for cave tours, and perhaps for use of the more highly developed campgrounds.

New roads in most cases would be located within developed areas. Two areas, however, require either new or rebuilt roads to the developments. One such road would extend from

the National River boundary into lower Richland Valley. In Richland, a one-way loop road is proposed, with interpretive stops and overlooks on the way to and from the campground opposite Woolum. The other road would connect an extension of Ark. 101 with the Mouth-of-Bufferalo area, thus improving visitor access and circulation from Buffalo River State Park to the lower end of the river. At Mouth-of-Bufferalo, another one-way loop, generally along the alignment of existing old roads, would be built as a motor nature trail for interpreting natural features of the Springfield and Salem Plateaus.

In the Buffalo’s rugged canyon at Hemmed-in-Hollow and Indian Creek, and also among the rough ridges and hollows near the river’s mouth, spacious areas would be reserved as primitive environments for hiking, horseback riding, trail camping, and nature study. When all the man-made structures are gone and the old roads are closed to vehicles, here would be perhaps the only real wilderness in all the Ozarks, a rare primeval setting for those who want to travel the back country on their own.

Private enterprises, granted concession contracts or permits, would operate boat and horse rental services on the National River, much as at present. As visits increase, the demand for these services should expand. It may be possible to offer short float trips of 2 or 3 miles and an hour or so in length to acquaint many more people with the floating experience.

Except for the present cottages and dining room at Buffalo River State Park, a general store at Boxley, and storage facilities for concessioners’ float equipment, no private service developments are planned within the National River. Visitors would obtain meals, lodging, and other services and supplies from private businesses outside the boundaries. Private campgrounds could, of course, also oper-

ate outside, providing conveniences (hot water, showers, electric hook-ups) not available within the National River.

Much of the people’s enjoyment of the National River would come from new opportunities to learn more about the area’s natural and historical features and the living forces that have shaped the river and its landscape.

The National Park Service would tell the story of the Buffalo in many places by many ways. A major visitor center would be located near U.S. 65 at Silver Hill, and secondary centers would be built at Pruitt on Ark. 7 and at Buffalo River State Park. Here would be exhibits and audiovisual programs, descriptive literature, and ranger-naturalists to answer visitors’ questions and offer assistance. Because the river is lengthy and features are scattered, most interpretive facilities would be dispersed throughout the National River. Exhibits at roadside interpretive points would explain how geological events have changed the land. Nature trails, with explanatory signs and labels, would lead through woodlands to the scenic attractions of Lost Valley, Hemmed-in-Hollow, Panther Creek, and Point Peter. Beauty Cave, now practically inaccessible, would eventually be opened for guided tours.

The full span of Indian occupation in the Ozarks—some 9,000 years—would be interpreted at both open terrace sites and bluff shelters. The story of settlement and homesteading along the Buffalo would be told with a pioneer farm, using collected log buildings and implements. Life in the valley’s isolated communities and the occasional Civil War skirmishes along the river would be told at Richland Creek and Boxley. That era could also be brought to mind in a working exhibit of Boxley’s water mill. Finally, the Buffalo’s mining boom—which extended through World War I—could be described among the ruins of the zinc camp at Rush.

Shoreland use: camping,

... horseback riding,

... and swimming.



The interpretive program would not be complete if it merely chronicles the great number of things and happenings along the Buffalo. Rather, the objective should be to show how these natural and historical features and events have acted on the river and how they, in turn, have been influenced by the Buffalo as a living stream. The forces of nature and man along the river have often acted as an interrelated system. Each visitor, layman as well as student, should come away from the National River with a new understanding of how these forces work.

Effective Conservation

To help in fitting both public and private uses to the land and to better define the areas where natural values take precedence over development, the Park Service has divided the National River into three broad zones: *Development Zone* (8,190 acres) This zone would contain nearly all the visitor and administrative facilities—roads, parking areas, buildings, and campgrounds. Buffer areas would allow for expansion. The Federal Government would acquire this land in fee simple, though owners might retain rights of residence for periods of up to 5 years, depending on the pace of development.

Conservation Zone (78,133 acres) Here are nearly all the resources which make the Buffalo nationally significant—the river and the natural and historical features along its course. The primary intention in managing these lands would be to maintain or restore the natural and historical scene. Development would be restricted to trails, primitive campsites, and minor interpretive facilities. The government would purchase the land in fee, possibly leasing back the better agricultural land to individuals who would maintain the pastoral scene by farming. In practically all cases, residents could retain life tenancy on their lands.



Fishing at Buffalo River State Park.



Private Use Zone (9,407 acres)

This includes almost all the better farm land—in Richland Valley, along the Buffalo downstream from Richland, and around Boxley. The government would only acquire rights-of-way for necessary roads and trails and such controls as are needed to prevent inappropriate development in this zone. Each ownership would have to be evaluated separately, but generally crop cultivation, grazing, selective timber harvesting, and single-family residences would be compatible uses. The Park Service's objective would be to maintain the scenic beauty and historic appearance of these farming valleys.

The developed part of the Boy Scouts' Camp Orr could also remain in private ownership within this zone, since the developments are not within view of the river and the land is not needed for public use.

Each major resource of the National River would be managed in ways that would permit its fullest use today while sustaining or increasing its usefulness for the future. The management programs would be complex and only their general scope can be suggested here.

Fish and Wildlife Hunting and fishing would be permitted and regulated under the laws of the State of Arkansas and the Federal Migratory Waterfowl Act. Public safety and good wildlife management would require restriction of hunting in some areas. Management would be directed mainly at improving deer and squirrel hunting. Wild turkey populations would also be encouraged wherever possible.

The Buffalo River fishery needs careful study to learn how best to maintain the native fish species in their highest productivity and best balance. In general, the river would be left alone until research shows better ways of managing a smallmouth bass stream.

Vegetation Planting might be done

in some areas to stabilize slopes or to screen developments, but most of the land needs only to be left alone. The ultimate goal for the public use and the preservation zones is to re-establish the native plant cover, including impressive stands of trees, through natural processes.

Farms and Woodlots Field crops and pastures, which are historical land features along the Buffalo, add variety to the riverscape. Land in the private-use zone would of course be farmed, and farming could continue under leases in selected areas of the conservation zone not needed for public access. In regulating agriculture, the National Park Service's objectives would be to insure sound land use to prevent pollution and scenic damage and to encourage economic farm units on the best agricultural lands.

Timber could also be harvested selectively in backdrop parts of the private-use areas in Richland Valley and at Boxley. Three criteria would be followed: maintenance of a healthy, productive forest; prevention of soil erosion and pollution; and preservation of other resources and features, including scenic views.

Mineral Resources Mining would be prohibited within the National River because of its harmful side effects—soil erosion, stream pollution, and damage to the riverscape. The river corridor is simply not roomy enough to accommodate mining without compromising the basic purposes of the National River.

The irreplaceable calcite and gypsum formations in caves along the river are important mineral resources also deserving complete protection. Caves within the National River would be inventoried and steps taken to protect their decorations from vandalism.

Historic and Prehistoric Remains The entire National River would be surveyed to locate and evaluate historic and prehistoric sites; structures and

A stretch of the middle Buffalo. This aerial view looks upstream toward Lookoff Bluff, near Woolum.



artifacts of value would be protected from further loss or deterioration. Only the most important structures would be restored. It would be impractical to restore Rush as an old mining camp, but the remaining buildings and foundations could be stabilized and interpreted. Log buildings, furnishings, and implements would also be collected for a pioneer farm at the headquarters area and representative Indian artifacts assembled for displays on the life of the Buffalo's earliest inhabitants.

The Water Resource The Buffalo, today a natural stream, is the prime resource needing protection. Briefly, what is at stake is the quality (or "cleanliness") of its waters. Planning, management, and use must all be directed toward perpetuating the river's vitality and appeal. Among other things, the Park Service would undertake:

- ☐ Basic research to gain a better understanding of the river's ecology;
- ☐ A program of conservation education about the river;



*Decaying remains
of the general store and
saloon at Rush.*



- ☐ Improvement of roads and trails to spread the impact of visitor use;
- ☐ Engineering studies of ways to avoid pollution from sewage or refuse disposal facilities;
- ☐ The prevention and removal of litter along the river.

But the Park Service would own only a small fraction of the total area within the Buffalo's 1,338-square-mile drainage basin. While the National River would protect the stream's scenic corridor, it would not take in most of the developments affecting water quality. Thus the Park Service would continually be concerned with avoiding a deterioration of natural processes in the watershed as well as along the main stream. It would encourage good land use in the watershed through education, persuasion, cooperation, or—as a last resort—any legal recourse available to enforce water quality standards.

A great many other individuals, private groups, and public agencies have

plans and programs for land use and resource development in the watershed. Among the public agencies are:

Several local Government units;
Arkansas Forestry Commission;
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission;
Arkansas Highway Commission;
Arkansas Pollution Control Commission;
Arkansas Publicity and Parks Commission;
U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife;
U.S. Forest Service;
U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

To help coordinate all the local, State, and Federal activities that affect the river and its watershed, it is suggested that a Buffalo River Regional Planning Commission be established under State law and through local initiative. The Commission's member groups and agencies would work together in their plans and programs for good land use and a more stable economy for the entire Buffalo River basin.

The Buffalo National River, as conceived here, is designed to help fill the need for more varied recreational opportunities in the Ozarks and to spur compatible economic development in the vicinity of the river. This plan is not intended to be the last word on the subject. Rather, it should be considered as a set of interrelated suggestions for a complex natural area that will inevitably be a center of intensive human use. Because the Buffalo is an outstanding example of wild America, it is essential that thought be given now to the best ways of preserving and using the river.

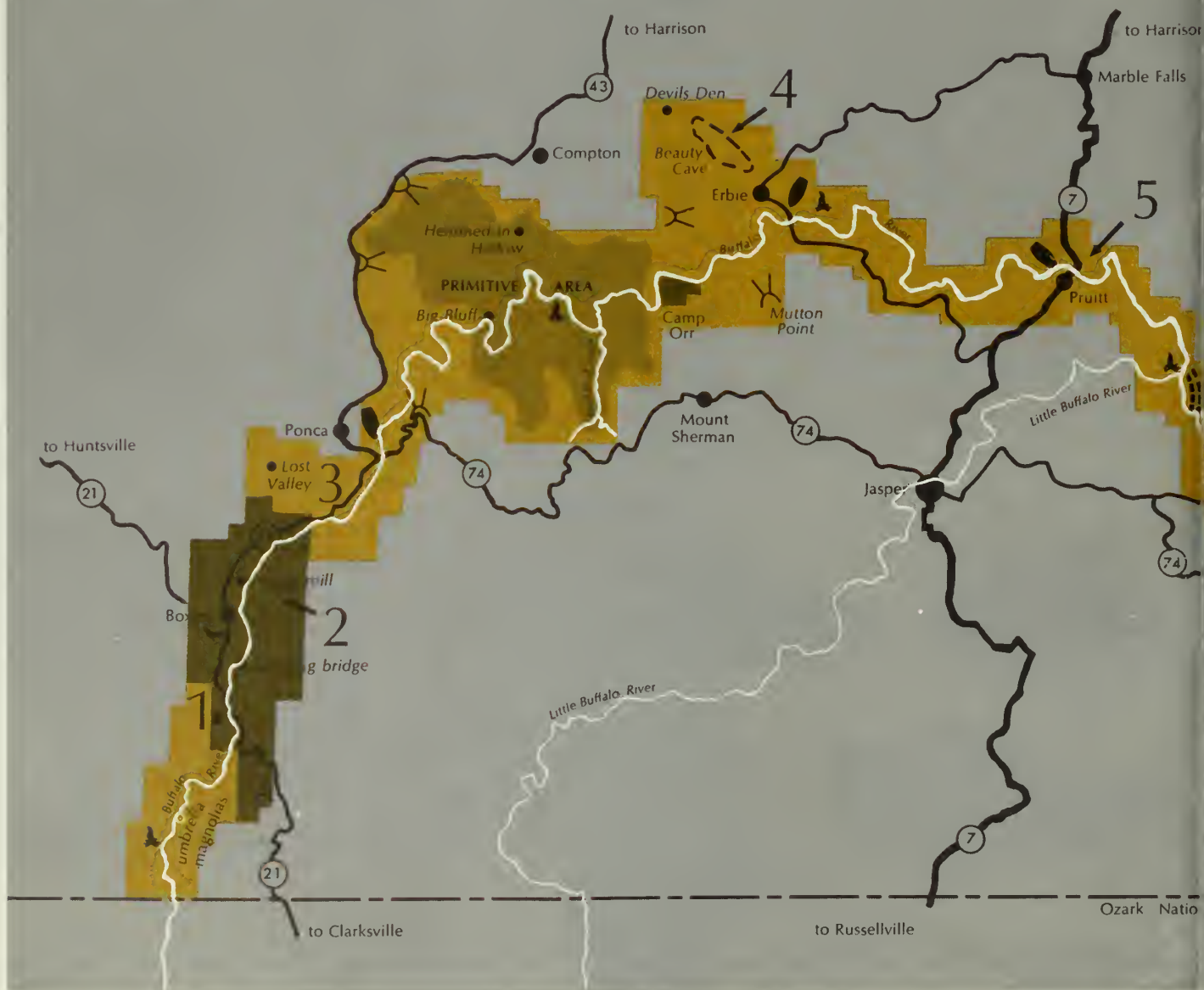
The Department of the Interior—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.



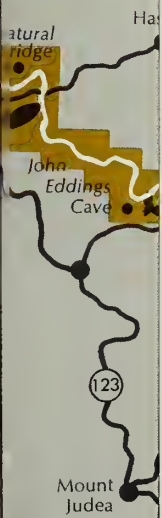
*Indian artifacts, collected at an open site
near the river.*

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT MAP

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1 BAT CAVE
Historical interpretation</p> <p>2 BOXLEY
Restored water mill
General store concession
Scenic tour road</p> <p>3 PONCA-LOST VALLEY
Campground
Picnic area
Nature trail
Interpretation</p> | <p>4 BEAUTY CAVE
Guided tours</p> <p>5 PRUITT
Secondary visitor center
Campground
Picnic area
Administrative area
Conservation education center</p> <p>6 CARVER
Primitive camp
Interpretive trail</p> | <p>7 WOOLUM
Campground
Picnic area</p> <p>8 RICHLAND VALLEY
Scenic tour road
Interpretive devices</p> <p>9 POINT PETER
Scenic overlooks
Nature trail</p> |
|--|--|---|



ent channel
f river



orest

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT MAP

1 BAT CAVE
Historical interpretation

2 BOXLEY
Restored water mill
General store concession
Scenic tour road

3 PONCA-LOST VALLEY
Campground
Picnic area
Nature trail
Interpretation

4 BEAUTY CAVE
Guided tours

5 PRUITT
Secondary visitor center
Campground
Picnic area
Administrative area
Conservation education center

6 CARVER
Primitive camp
Interpretive trail

7 WOOLUM
Campground
Picnic area

8 RICHLAND VALLEY
Scenic tour road
Interpretive devices

9 POINT PETER
Scenic overlooks
Nature trail

